The New Board

L to R: Mike Redlich, Evan Williams, John Raff, Frank Warren, Arnold Milstein

http://www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

The follow were officers and board members were elected at the December Main Meeting.

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Vice-President · · · · · · · · · · · Frank Warren

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Secretary · · · · · · · · · · · · · · Mike Redlich

Board · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · John Raff

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · Gregg McCarthy

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · Arnold Milstein

· Norm Wiss

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Tips for reviewers: Why does anyone need it? Why did you like it or hate it? Ease (or difficulty) of installation, learning and use. Would you pay for it?

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Selected Short Subjects

Robert Hawes, ACGNJ (r_d_hawes@hotmail.com)

There were mistakes in last month's article that were utterly, completely and totally **my** fault.(I call what I submit to this newsletter "articles". To call them "columns" seems a bit presumptuous, somehow). One was a typo - a simple singular/plural switch, the kind a spell checker can't fix. I must have read that particular paragraph dozens of times and I missed it every single time. (That's **not** an exaggeration. If you're going to write this type of thing, you'd better be in love with your own words. You'll be reading them over and over again). I hate when a grammatical error gets published. I feel it out there, set in stone, mocking me forever. (I can hear future historians saying; "Bob Hawes? Oh, yeah. Wasn't he the guy who ruined that computer club newsletter?"). The other errors were errors of fact, in my "Pop Quiz". I'll deal with them specifically in the "Answers" appendix at the end of this article. That's enough apologizing for now. We'll have some trivia next, then return to my futile rant from last month

A couple of times in the past, I've come across small bits of useful knowledge that most people didn't seem to be aware of. If I'd been an ACGNJ member back then, I could have written some informative (and I hope interesting) newsletter articles. However, this kind of stuff tends to have a short shelf life. For instance, who cares now that there were two different wiring schemes used by the nine conductor ribbon cable adapters that ran from the ten pin DIP headers on motherboards and I/O cards (pin 10 was an unused dummy) to the DB9 or DB25 serial port sockets on the backs of computer cases? If you accidentally installed the wrong one in your PC, absolutely nothing that you could do on the software end would ever make that serial port work correctly. While it's true that since the adoption of PS/2 mice (mouses?) and internal modems, most computers don't even use their serial ports anymore, there's a significant minority that still do, and probably always will. Many scientific and industrial data collection devices use serial communications. Then, there are literally **millions** of cash registers out there that can only interact with computers through serial ports, far too many to ever allow for a complete switch to a newer protocol. Indeed, a cash register dealer I used to work for once almost threw out a perfectly good computer because someone (**not** me) had stuck in the wrong adapter. Luckily, I noticed it in time. Both designs were visually identical, but I worked out an easy continuity test that just about anybody could have used to tell them apart - a simple and virtually foolproof way of seeing if the first two conductors were 1 and 2 or 1 and 6. (For you trivia buffs: on one ribbon cable layout, the output pins ran 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9; while on the other, the pins ran 1, 6, 2, 7, 3, 8, 4, 9 and finally 5. You can imagine how switching that would scramble the signals). With the move to the ATX motherboard design standard, this piece of information became completely irrelevant.

Now, I've got a little mnemonic device that I want to pass along before it, too, becomes obsolete. We all know how hard disk manufacturers have been lying to us for years about the sizes of their devices (that sounds sort of dirty, doesn't it?) by quoting decimal Megabytes (and now Gigabytes) instead of the computer-correct hexadecimal values. (For example, a so-called 80 GB drive can truly hold only 74.5 **real** GB). I thought that a degree of maturity and honesty had come to the industry when the CD specifications were announced. The 650 MB and 700 MB CDs can actually take about 652 MB and 703 MB, respectively. But I guess it was too good to last. A "4.7 GB" DVD really holds just 4.37 GB. I will now coin a phrase that (unless someone can prove a prior claim) I intend to refer to from now on as ***Hawes' Second Law of the Universe***; "The total capacity of **any** type of container will always be just a teeny, tiny bit smaller than the amount of stuff you try to put into it". When assembling a data DVD, unless you want to run into this immutable fact of life, you'd better keep close track of your total size, and remember that the limit is 4.**37** GB, not 4.7 GB. The situation gets even worse because, depending what program you're using, you'll probably get your "total files selected" information in either MB or KB, **not** GB. According to the Nero Burning ROM program, DVD total capacities are 4,483 MB for DVD+R or DVD+RW, and 4,489 MB for DVD-R or DVD-RW, so 4,480 MB is a nice round figure to shoot for. In Kilobytes, a good round figure turns out to be 4,590,000 KB (that's even closer, at 4,482.42 MB, which **is** 4.37 GB to two decimal places). Now for my memory trick: 4.37 GB, 4,480 MB, 4,590,000 KB, 4+3=7, 4+4=8, 4+5=9.

I've only got time to mention one "time bug" this issue, and it's a real weird one. As I may have mentioned in a previous article, I use CDs (and now DVDs) as my primary means of backup. However, I only use regular disks, not RWs. I just use re-writable disks for temporary transfers and experiments. This particular disk was a little of both. It's a multi-session CD-RW disk with two tracks, one in each of two sessions. Session one contains a 327 MB "first draft" test track for a CD I was making in January, 2004. Track two (in session two) contains 400 files (in 263 MB) that I had to get duplicated someplace else very quickly in March, 2004. So quickly that I didn't want to waste time erasing the CD, and just added the second session. Ordinarily, I would have erased and re-used this disk long ago, but it got put in the wrong pile and forgotten, until I just happened to find it a few weeks ago. Since I was writing about time bugs at the time, I decided to compare it to the final version of the CD for which track one was a test. (All files from both tracks were still readable because session one had been automatically imported into session two). To my surprise, all 161 files in session one were dated two days and 11 hours earlier than the files in the final CD. (That's exactly **59** hours for **every** file).

Since the original source copies for the 400 files in session two were still on my hard disk, I compared them to the CD and found the times and dates for all 400 to be equal. So only the files in session one were buggy, but were the actual errors in the table of contents of session one or session two? (CDs don't have FATs, they have TOCs). Fortunately, there was a way for me to find out. Most CD/DVD creation programs have a

Continued

"Read Track", "Copy Track" or "Save Track" function, which can copy any single existing CD track to an ISO image file on a hard drive. Usually, from a multi-session disk, only the image made from the first track can then be successfully used to create a new CD, but since that's the one I wanted, this wasn't a problem. I made an image from track one of the multi-session CD-RW and used it to create a new single session CD-RW disk. When compared to the multi-session CD, all 161 files on the new CD had the 59 hour time bug. When compared to the "final draft" CD, all 161 times and dates were equal. So those particular errors didn't happen when the original track was created. They occurred in March of 2004, when session one was imported into session two. This warrants further investigation, to see if such errors are repeatable and predictable. Unfortunately, this article's deadline doesn't give me the time to do it right now.

APPENDIX 1: Pop Quiz Answers

I don't like pundits who criticize a lot but never provide any reasonable suggestions for improvement. As I was writing my previous article, I grew worried about the negative tone it was developing. What else could I do, though? I can prove that "time bugs" exist, but the only response Microsoft has ever given is to deny that anything that's happening is wrong. Who are you going to believe, me or the Great God Gates? So I decided to end on a lighter note, by creating a funny quiz from some jokes that had been floating around in my head for years. I didn't have any actual computer jokes, but I remembered a math joke from my distant college days, so I threw it in too. (This is, after all, the publication of a technical association). What I completely forgot is that jokes aren't funny until you get to the punch lines. You can all stop holding your breaths now, here are the answers:

Question 1: René Descartes <u>didn't</u> say; "I think . . .

In his Discours de la Méthode, Descartes said; "Cogito Ergo Sum", or; "I think, therefore I am". However, elsewhere in that publication, he wrote; "It is very certain that, when it is not in our power to determine what is true, we ought to act according to what is most probable", and; "I concluded that I might take as a general rule the principle that all things which we very clearly and obviously conceive are true: only observing, however, that there is some difficulty in rightly determining the objects which we distinctly conceive". From those passages, we can see that he wasn't really quite as certain as his first quote makes him sound. So he really should have said; "I <u>**think**</u> I think, therefore I might be". (Maybe he couldn't figure out how to put that in Latin). In honor of my old LP collection, give yourself 33 1/3 points if you came even close.

Question 2: Ben Franklin <u>didn't</u> say; "Never put off until tomorrow what you can . . .

Everybody gets 33 1/3 points for this one, because Ben Franklin **really** didn't say; "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today". That's what I remember being taught in school, but I can't find any source that claims it now. According to Franklin himself, much of his Poor Richard's Almanack was a re-telling of the "wisdom of the ages and nations". So if he ever did use this saying, he was quoting, not creating. Some sources now attribute it to Thomas Jefferson, but according to Barlett's Familiar Quotations, it can be found in a letter written in 1749 by Lord Chesterfield. At that time, Jefferson would have been only six years old. Franklin, on the other hand, would have been forty-three. Among his long list of accomplishments, Ben served as a postmaster and an ambassador, so he **was**, in fact, a bureaucrat. He was one of the signers of the Constitution in 1787, but he died just three years later, so he didn't have time to become deeply entrenched in the newly evolving government. If he had, he might well have said; "Never put off until tomorrow what you can table indefinitely pending further review by a special executive committee to be appointed in closed session at some time during the next fiscal year".

Question 3: What is dCabin over Cabin?

Here's where I made my biggest mistake. I left some words out of the question that **really** affect the meaning. It should have been; "What is *the integral of* dCabin over Cabin"? If I hadn't just given away all the points for the previous question, I'd be tempted to do so here. However, I **did** give you permission to get help. If, as I suggested, you'd asked a silly college freshman, he or she would probably have known the right question as well as the correct answer. So, since I just missed three of the eight words, this time everyone gets three-eighths credit, or 12½ of the 33 1/3 total points. Give yourself the remaining 20 5/6 points **only** if you said Log Cabin. That's the "classic" funny answer I was looking for. (The expression "Log" identifies a logarithm, which can be based on the powers of any number. The particular base to be used is written in subscript immediately afterwards. When, as above, no subscript is specified, it is assumed to be base 10, a decimal or common logarithm. However, logarithms based on an important mathematical constant called "e" get a special symbol of their own; "Ln". These are called Naperian or natural logarithms. That's what you get when you integrate the differential coefficient (derivative) of any function divided by the function itself. So the absolutely correct answer would be Ln Cabin, but it's just not funny that way). When I said to ask a silly college freshman, I meant a silly Engineering or Science student. A silly English Lit. major, for instance, probably wouldn't have been much help with a math joke like this.

Extra Credit Question: Who's buried in Grant's Tomb?

There are actually two answers to this old joke, depending on what you mean by "buried". If you use a broad definition like; "laid to rest", then the answer is Grant **and** Mrs. Grant. If you take the narrow definition; "covered with dirt under ground", then the answer is **no one**. Ulysses Simpson Grant, the eighteenth President of the United States of America, and his wife, Julia Dent Grant are, indeed, there. However, they are each entombed in granite and marble. In honor of my old Singles collection, give yourself 45 extra points if you got either one of those answers. In memory of my parents' collection of even older records, give yourself 78 extra points if you got them both.

If you said Jimmy Hoffa, then take all the points you want, and please don't hurt me. 🖳

From The DealsGuy For January 2006

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group.

I can't emphasize enough the value of users group help and here is an example: Recently, while preparing to drive over to our beach condo for a couple of days, I wanted to copy a floppy disk containing some important files not backed up. When I attempted to copy it, the process stopped in the middle telling me my second disk was corrupted. I tried to stop the process so I could use another disk, but couldn't get the procedure to go away. Even when I killed Windows Explorer, then restarted it, and was ready with a new disk, it tried unsuccessfully to resume the process. Finally, I decided to reboot the computer in an effort to clear it, and when it tried to restart, all I got was the opening Intel screen and nothing more. After forcing the machine to shut down, and a brief pause, I tried to start the computer again and it would not go past the startup Intel screen.

Horror set in and I wondered what I might have done to screw it up, and what to do next. I was lost! All of a sudden I remembered something I had read only a couple days before in a users group newsletter while browsing a write-up about their Q & A session. A member reported that they could not get their computer to boot and finally removed a USB Flash Drive they had been using before they shut it off. It booted up just fine with the flash drive removed. Since I was using a USB Flash Drive while trying a new backup program, I removed it, tried to boot again, and was very relieved when the computer booted normally. I am running Windows XP Professional.

I can't remember which newsletter I read that in, but my thanks to the user group community and the newsletters I receive from them. I read them from cover to cover, especially about their Q & A sessions and sometimes find good information that I think my readers might use. It was interesting that when I tried rebooting again with a 256 Meg USB Flash Drive plugged in; it booted just fine, but would not boot with the one gig USB drive plugged in. I would never have thought to remove that flash drive so I hope my experience was useful to my readers.

*Problems in Dell Land

I read in Ed Foster's Gripe Line [*http://www.gripe2ed.com*] about a company that had bought almost 200 Dell Optiplex GX270 PCs, and when a known defect arose concerning a capacitor on the motherboard that tended to swell and cause problems, it should have been covered by their support contract, but Dell didn't live up to their agreement. They started to replace them, but after more problem boards were found, they stopped and instead eventually wanted the company to trade them in. For financial reasons the customer didn't want to do that and any negotiations finally stopped. It was known that some larger companies with the same problem had gotten it resolved, but nobody knows why. Up until now, I had thought Dell had a good name in the industry and I don't know the outcome. I couldn't find this story posted at this writing, maybe because I read it in an August issue. You need to set up a password to access the Gripe Line Web site. For information about the problem, see [*http://www.dslreports.com/forum/remark,13709831*].

For the folks who ask me about the trade shows, we recently worked the National Safety Council Show [*http://www.safety2005.org*] that was very interesting. It used about 500,000 square feet of exhibit space and had over 20,000 attendees from around the globe. You wouldn't think so, but I saw some cutting-edge technology featured there. Like many trade shows here, they had an evening party for attendees at Universal Studios.

We also worked the interesting Bank Administration Industry show. [*http://www.bai.org*] You would have easily recognized many names exhibiting there, which included well known ATM machines, security names and software companies like Microsoft, Adobe, Oracle USA and many others well known to users group people. The exhibit area was about 400,000 sq. ft. of area. Free food for the attendees too. Attendance was about 12,000. Central Florida is a hotbed of trade show activity, but we only work a few of them.

*Still Good

Don't forget the deal is still good for the WebBuild Express software for creating your Web site. To download it at [*http://store.esellerate.net/nfti/store*], use the coupon code CPN8348901136, when it calls for it, to receive your 25% discount. I have a trial version but I have not tried it out yet. Between health problems and laziness, I don't have much for you this month, but I hope you took advantage of the APCUG announcements for deals.

*The Lost Can Often Be Found

Have you ever deleted a file and later found you should not have done that? No problem, just go to the Recycle Bin and get it back. Come to find out though, it has been dumped by the Recycle Bin. Now you have another problem; but not if you have PC Inspector, which can do unbelievable things when it comes to recovering deleted files from your hard drive. Your hard drive has to be working properly for it to work.

Best of all, PC Inspector is Freeware and it can be downloaded at [*http://www.pcinspector.de/file_recovery/uK/welcome.htm*]. If you have used Secure Clean or Wipe Drive, forget about it. I found this information in a UG newsletter, but have not tried it personally.

*Announcement For NeoDownloader (Edited to shorten)

We offer a special. User group people get a 25% discount on the new version of NeoDownloader by email request..

September 27, 2005: Neowise Software, the leading developer of task automation tools, announces the newest major version of their NeoDownloader. This powerful multithreaded tool for automatic downloading of pictures, audio and video files now features the unique Web Spider technology that guarantees a fast and steady download for both high and low bandwidth. With its improved interface, new image viewer and media player, NeoDownloader

Continued

Buying a New PC?

Vinnie Labash (labash@spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG, Florida

Don't buy a low end PC this year if you have any plans of moving to Microsoft's new Vista operating system next year. If you're sticking with XP, almost anything will do, even video that's integrated with the motherboard.

Vista is not due for almost a year, but a little forethought before buying will prevent much regret in 2006. I say this because if Microsoft keeps only half its promises about new features and improved security in Vista, most of its customers will want to make the move to the new operating system. If your computer's specifications are too weak or only marginally acceptable to Vista, you will either not be able to upgrade or wish you hadn't tried.

Let's start with the processor. You don't a need top-of-the-line CPU, but don't buy any thing that's less than mid-range. Either Intel or AMD will do, and you should probably go for a duel-core processor for added speed and processing muscle. By the time Vista is on the scene, a lot more 64 bit software may be on hand. A 64 bit processor makes good sense since it can also handle today's 32 bit programs.

Microsoft appears likely to make 512MB of RAM its minimum requirement. Never settle for minimum requirements with memory. I'm sure you could fly cross-country in a two seat one engine monoplane, but your flight would be much more comfortable if you were sipping your favorite beverage while lounging in a high powered commercial passenger jet. Memory is cheap. Buy at least one gigabyte of memory, two if you decide on a 64 bit processor.

Only masochists should buy a machine with video that's integrated with chips on the motherboard. Integrated video shares your processor memory with your applications and often results in poor performance. Buy the cheapest video card that has at least 256MB of on-board RAM. You will be happy.

You will need a fast DVD drive that is capable of recording multiple formats. This is an ideal storage medium for backups. Get two. They're not prohibitively expensive any more.

More and more people have digital cameras, picture-phones, music players, video-cams, and other peripherals which attach to computers in one fashion or another. Look for a machine with at least six USB 2.0 connectors. It doesn't hurt to have one IEEE 1394, or Firewire connector.

You owe it to yourself to have a 17" or larger flat panel monitor. Don't tell me you can't afford it. Dell makes a 23" outstanding flat panel device for less than $1,000. Even good 19" monitors can be had for $450 or less.

Continued

DealsGuy, *continued*

expands the horizons of your web experience by improving your Internet browsing habits.

Each download job you trust to NeoDownloader starts with a profile where you can set file types, size limits, resolution, and scanning depth. The program scans the site of your interest and picks out only the files that match your profile. The download is fully automated but you can control it through the download progress window and fine-tune its performance. The download can run simultaneously with scanning, or after full scanning of the site is completed. Downloaded files become instantly available in the image preview zone of the program window.

The new version includes a collection of project templates and sample projects to get started fast. The built-in image viewer and media player provide instant access to downloaded files. A Drop basket and a set of hotkeys help you to launch a project from any application. The download library replicates source sites and organizes files in an easy-to-use way. The password list secures automatic login to password-protected websites.

NeoDownloader v2.0 Features at the Glance

- Downloads pictures, audio and video that match user preferences
- Filters for file type, size, resolution and URL keywords
- Settings for the scanning depth for internal and external links
- Up to 10 simultaneous connections

- Support for password protected sites
- New project profile settings
- Drop basket facility to download from other applications
- Built-in image viewer featuring slideshow and wallpaper setting support
- Built-in media player

NeoDownloader runs under Windows 98, NT 4.0, Me, 2000, XP platforms and costs $39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. Free lifetime technical support and minor upgrades are extended to all registered users. A fully functional evaluation version is available as a free download at

[*http://www.neowise.com/ftp/NeoDownloaderSetup.exe*].

Company Website [*http://www.neowise.com*].

Product page: [*http://www.neowise.com/neodownloader/*]

Email: [*alexey@neowise.com*].

Best regards, Alexey Surkis, CEO of Neowise Software

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check the new announcement pages on my Web site. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [*bobclick@mindspring.com*]. Visit my Web site at [*http://www.dealsguy.com*]. 🖳

Ram & Reason: A Virus and Incident Checklist

Rob Rice, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Much has been said about virus and malicious software prevention, but what if all of your precautions fail? So there you are, happily clicking along the Internet when suddenly a popup ad obstructs your view. You start to close it and then another and then another pops up so that in just a few seconds there are so many pop-up ads that you cannot possibly close them all as they just keep coming. So what do you? Delete them as fast as you can in hopes that they will stop? Turn off the computer? Suddenly a program appears from nowhere and informs you that you have been infected with a trojan virus and the program needs to scan your system so that the trojan can be removed. The problem is that you do not remember ever having installed this program. Do you trust it?

There are some industry-accepted procedures for dealing with this type of incident and any virus or trojan infection. Just follow these five simple steps in the following order to minimize damage:

1. Do not turn off your computer unless you are certain that your files are being actively deleted!

2. Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection.

3. Write down any error messages and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred.

4. Mark the computer "Do Not Use".

5. Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened identifying a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus, anti-trojan tools.

Step One:Do not turn off your computer.

Not every trojan and virus is the same so this rule will have exceptions, but generally you do not want to turn off the computer unless you can see that the virus is deleting your files. If you think that it can be stopped from deleting your files without turning off the computer, then this is a better option than turning off the computer. The reason is that while turning the computer off will temporarily stop the damage more harm can come when you turn the computer back on. System files can be infected when loading, boot sectors contaminated, hard drive partitions erased, registries corrupted. For example, on a Windows system every time you make a major system change one of the first things that it wants you to do is reboot, "To allow the changes to take effect". In the case of a virus or trojan, the last thing we want to do is to allow the changes to take effect.

Step Two: Disconnect from the Network

Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection. Trojans are designed to open a door and let other trojans, spyware and viruses in. Physically disconnecting its link to the Internet stops this behavior, prevents your personnel information from going out and prevents other machines from being infected. Many checklists have this action rated number one and for good reasons. I rate it here as step two because step one is simply a quick decision that can have a significant impact on the recovery outcome.

Step Three:Record all Messages

Write down any error messages that appear and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred. This is important not only for repairing the system but also for identifying which alerts are real and which ones are bogus. Error messages that contain misspellings and poor grammar are likely bogus and generated by the virus.

Step Four: Mark the computer "Do Not Use".

This is in case you get called away and have to leave the system alone for any length of time.

Step Five:Run sofware you are certain is yours

Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened to identify a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus anti-trojan tools.

Continued

Buying a New PC, *continued*

Hard disk space has never been cheaper. Dual 250GB hard drives need not be an extravagance this holiday season if you want the space for music and video files. Optionally, install RAID 1 for disk mirroring and instant automatic backup. If one hard drive is enough, an external USB 2.0 connected hard drive is an excellent backup device.

Audiophiles can consult Creative Labs and drool over X-Fi Elite Pro. Then spring for good speakers with a subwoofer. The rest of us can be content with audio chips integrated with the motherboard.

Media center PCs come with remote control devices and a TV tuner. They are meant to be operated from a distance to play music, present slide shows, view photos, and watch TV. Don't buy the cheapest machines because they leave out a lot of important features.

Most salespeople are paid on a combination of salary, commissions, and bonuses for selling specific makes and models. Know what you are looking for before visiting a showroom, and don't let a sales person talk you into more or less machine than you want. It's a very good idea to come to your next PC User Group meeting and get the best advice from all the friendly people you will meet there. Many of them will help you configure your new machine.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Don't Be a Loser at the Rebate Games

Jim Sanders (editor@noccc.org), Editor, North Orange County Computer Club

Most of us have bought something that sounded like a great value — "After Rebate or Rebates." Everywhere from a great price to FREE! Most are legitimate. Most require a fair amount of work to claim. Most are never claimed. Most say you will have to wait 6 to 10 weeks for a check (for some that turns into 6 to10 months). Many have tricky fine print. A few are outright scams!

Below are a list of things that you should do, as opposed to just think about, if your going to buy an item with a rebate and have any real intention of claiming the rebate and actually getting it. Following that are three emails that dealt with a denied rebate claim for our new President Elise Edgell.

If you are going to buy an item with a rebate, while you are at the checkout stand, **not after you get home**, do the following:

• Write down the sales clerk's name then ask him to show you that you have all the items needed to claim the rebate. Ask him to put an X on the correct UPC barcode.

• Make sure you have a copy of the correct rebate form(s). Some are inside the box. You just paid for the item, it is yours, open the box and read the terms.

• If it is an upgrade rebate, it is better to find out if your old product qualifies **before** you go to the store. Check the vendor's website, call the store and ask!

READ THE FINE PRINT! THEN READ IT AGAIN!

• Read the "Proof of Purchase" requirement list.

• Does it require the original "Sales Receipt" or is a copy OK. If the original is required, ask the store for a duplicate original that is acceptable for a product exchange if there is a problem with the product. Some stores provide a "Rebate Receipt." Make sure that matches the requirement list.

• Check the postmark requirement, I have seen one that gave you only three days to get it postmarked. Don't wait till the last day to mail it.

• Make sure a website address and/or telephone number is included that you can use to contact the rebate center about your rebate. Most of the upscale rebate centers include an 800 number.

• Make two copies of **all** documentation submitted. If a cheesy rebate center decides to tell you they never received your request, without copies, you're up the proverbial creek. I am working on an article about using your scanner for this purpose.

• I think it is a good idea to include one of the documentation photocopies with the submission to make the point that you have copies. Mark it "CC: Vendor, My Files." On the larger rebates, buying the $0.95 proof of delivery service at the post office is cheap insurance. Having a witness to the mailing doesn't hurt. Error on your side of the game. If it says 6 to 8 weeks, check at 6 weeks, don't wait three months. Be reasonable with phone calls but check the website as often as you like. Mark your calendar to remind yourself to check on the rebate. Keep a folder for all of your rebates. Move completed ones to another folder. Once you get your rebate check, read how long it is good for. Some are good for 6 months. Most are void after 60 days. A few are void after 30 days. I got one that was expired when it was delivered. When you think you have been shafted, don't just grimace and bear it, complain. Complain to the retailer. Complain to the vendor. If all else fails, file a complaint with the FTC at *www.ftc.gov*. You can also file a complaint with the Better Business Bureau at *www.bbb.org*. Taking the retailer to Small Claims Court is an option.

The email exchange with BFG Technologies, Inc.

Dear Sir, My name is Jim Sanders, and I am the editor of the North Orange County Computer Club's newsletter, the Orange Bytes. PDF copies of the publication are available at *http://www.noccc.org*. For several weeks I have been gathering material for an article on the rebate games. Our members should see it in the next issue of the newsletter. This is a hot issue with our members as a number have been burned by various rebate offers. In a lot of cases it was due to not reading the fine print, not crossing all T's or dotting all I's, a claim that the request was never received or not received in time.

In some instances the rebate was a pure scam. A few refused rebates may be caused by human error on the part of the highly trained, intelligent, well paid staff of the rebate center. A common reason given for a rebate denial is that a required piece of documentation was not included.

All too often, that claim cannot be refuted as the original was sent in and the suggestion to photocopy all submitted documentation was not followed because of the hassle involved. In

Continued

Virus Checklist, *continued*

It's possible that your antivirus or anti-trojan software may have detected the attack and started running a system scan or is prompting you and waiting for instructions. If you are certain that it is your software then let it do what it wants to do and let it clean the system. If you have any doubts as to whether the program is in fact one of your programs then **do not run the software**!

Some trojans actually install and run a program pretending to be antivirus/anti-trojan software and scan your system all the while claiming to be cleaning your computer. In reality it is part of the trojan. Some of these programs look very commercial and very polished so be careful!

Rob Rice is a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at articles@isp.com

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an interesting coincidence of timing, our club President, Elise Edgell, showed me the rebate denial post card that she received on 7/16/2005. The reason given for the refusal: "We did not receive a sales receipt with your request." She purchased a BFG GeForce FX 5500 OC at a special Fry's Electronics' one day sale where a $50 rebate was offered on your product. In this case, Elise did scan all the documentation sent in with the rebate and kept it as a JPG file. In addition, the original documentation was stapled to a printout of that file and a notation was hand printed on that sheet, in bold marker pen: "CC: Vendor, My Files." That file is attached to this email. As both of us bought the product and requested the rebate in the same way, it will be interesting to see if I get the same post card.

I understand that you contract the rebate function to other companies, but the typical club member that has a problem thinks the problem is with the company that made the product and offered the rebate. It is your reputation that suffers, not the rebate center.

Would you express your opinion on which of the above reasons might be the cause of this rebate being denied?

Sincerely,

Jim Sanders, Editor, NOCCC Orange Bytes

Hi Jim,

Thanks for contacting BFG Technologies, and thanks for giving us the opportunity to clarify this particular rebate situation.

Looking at the picture in your attachment of Elise's submission, it appears there is not a copy of her "Sales Receipt" included along with the other required items.

In addition to the "Rebate Form/Receipt" and the "Proof of Purchase" cut from the box, a copy of the "Sales Receipt" is required. With Fry's it can sometimes be confusing because they label the Rebate Form as a "Rebate Receipt". This could lead a customer into thinking that the form was both the rebate form and the sales receipt, although they are actually two separate items.

Some additional information that may be of interest; this is one of two rebates that have the highest redemption rates we have ever run. This indicates to us that majority of customers are including all the correct documentation and getting the rebate for this particular program.

In this particular case, the rebate house did refuse the rebate on proper grounds. However, we will contact the rebate house and approve Elise's rebate, and yours as well. We often do that for customers who contact us and believe that that they were denied incorrectly. We look into individual cases and make approvals where the facts support it.

Thanks again for giving us the opportunity to respond. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Kind regards, John @ BFG

Hi John,

Thank you for your quick response and also for fixing the problem.

In an effort to resolve why it became a problem in the first place, I made a trip to the Anaheim Fry's Electronics store. I asked to speak to the person in charge of dealing with rebates. The woman that responded to that request was pleasant enough, but not very helpful. I asked why Fry's was having their checkout clerks tell customers that the "Rebate Receipt" is the same as the full sales receipt for rebate purposes. Her response was:

"Well, sometimes it is and sometimes it's not." The discussion lasted several minutes. It bogged down into questions of semantics, perception, lack of explicit wording, and responsibility. Her rebuttal to your assertion that it is a "Rebate Form/Receipt" was that if you cut that form in two just above the line "Rebate Form:" you have a "Receipt" and a "Rebate Form." That to help the customer by not having multiple, small, separate documents that are more easily lost, or difficult to match up with the appropriate rebate form, they are printed together.

That the "Proof of purchase requirements:" Section 3, says "a copy of your receipt," not "Sales Receipt," not "Full Sales Receipt," not "Rebate Receipt," just "Receipt." That obviously the "Rebate Receipt" is a receipt. I commented that the Fry's IT department controlled what is printed and how it is printed. That it would be trivial for them to better separate the two forms with a couple of extra blank lines, a line of asterisks, and a line that says "Cut here." That they could easily have changed Section 3 to explicitly state what kind of "Receipt" was required. That if printing the "Rebate Receipt" is supposed to be a courtesy to the customer, it would be trivial to have the computer print out a "Duplicate Sales Receipt" when that was required by the vendor. That if Fry's is going to the effort to provide this courtesy service at all, they should go the extra step, and endeavor to do it correctly, rather than in the current, confusing, fashion. I commented that Fry's apparently feels it is their responsibility to remind customers that they should make a copy of all documentation submitted for a rebate by handing out a yellow sheet with that warning, why not expand it to include a caution about the receipt problem.

Her response was in essence, I don't have any control over what the IT department does. I counted to ten, thanked her for her time and left. I hope this feedback helps you with future programs.

Sincerely,

Jim Sanders Editor, NOCCC Orange Bytes

On 7-23-05 we put on our best optimistic face and went to the *http://www.rebatestatus.com* website to see how well the rebate had been approved. We were hoping to see a message like: "The check is in the mail.," and lo and behold we did.

Pony Express or 4th Class, but in the mail.

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Where Did All Those Photos Go? File Management

Jack Wilfore, Hilton Head Is land Com puter Club, South Carolina [www.hhicc.org/]

Do you find that when pho tos get trans ferred from your cam era to the com puter, you feel you have lost con trol? For now, let's see if we can't gain back just a lit tle of that con trol.

When pho tos trans fer from your cam era to your com puter, it's re ally im por tant for you to know ex actly where they go and where they get "filed". There is noth ing more frus trat ing than hav ing your pho tos or other im ages or doc u ments, or let ters or scans get filed in your com puter, and then you can't find them later.

File Managment

This brings us to the subject of this article, "File Man age ment". Let's begin with the thought that your computer is noth ing more that a big fil ing cab i net. Now its up to you to de cide where and how to organize your "files" on your com puter, just as it is with the file cab i net in your of fice.

Dige Drives

Be fore we get to ac tu ally man ag ing your files, a brief re view of how your com puter stores data. Com puters store data on "drives", some drives are in side the com puter and some may be out side or ex ter nal to the com puter. You prob a bly al ready know that the "C" drive stores everything inside the com puter. It is the heart and soul of your com puter, and when you have a disk crash, its usu ally your "C" drive that goes, and you are out of busi ness. Other drives may in clude an "A" drive for use of a floppy disk, and a "D" drive des ig nated as CD-ROM drive which is for your CD's. Other ex ter nal drives, also get as signed let ter des ig na tions, and could in clude re mov able or ex ter nal drives such as zip drives, or mem ory cards, or dock ing stations, or cameras, etc. If you left click on the "My Computer" icon on your desktop, you can see these disk drives. You can also view what's on each drive by us ing your left mouse but ton to dou ble-click on the A, C, or D icon.
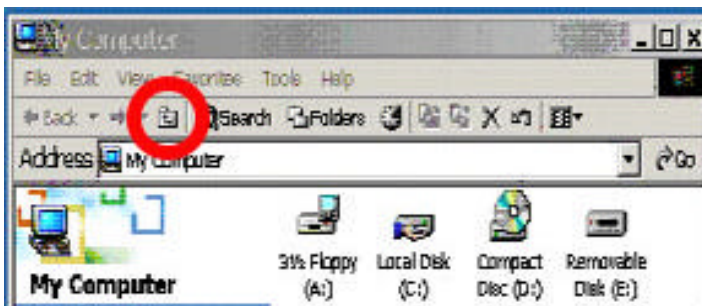
There is one very im por tant icon I want to point, when you are look ing at "Win dows". The top bar (usu ally blue) across the top of a window is the Title Bar, the next bar down on the above win dow is a Menu Bar, and the third bar down is the Task Bar. On this screen shot, I want to point out one very im por tant icon, the UP ONE LEVEL icon within the red cir cle, which usu ally looks like a folder with an up ar row. Get fa mil iar with and use this icon to move around within your "drives", or file cab i net.
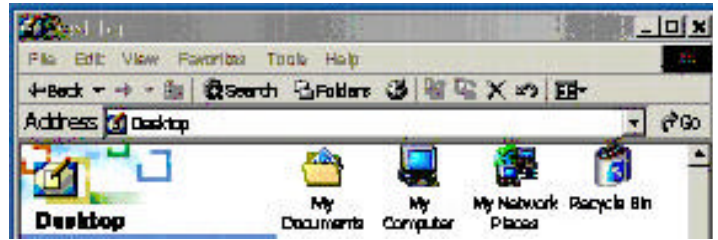
Try it! If you left mouse click that UP ONE LEVEL icon, the next window you see is the Desktop. Within the Desktop win dow, you can see the "My Doc u ments" folder, which is the cor ner stone of the file man age ment struc ture.

Files, Folders and the File Cabinets

I like to think of drives as file cab i nets. They store elec tronic items such as doc u ments, pho tos, im ages, spread sheets, pro grams etc. Drives may have individual files (usually not a very good idea), and fold ers which usu ally con tain a col lec tion of files on a par tic u lar topic or a par tic u lar use.

Re call that the "C" drive stores ev ery thing. Now as these files come in, we just can't let them go any where, this is where we can ac tu ally put them into an ap pro pri ate folder of our choice. And this is how you will get your file cab i net or ga nized. Let's re view two key items:
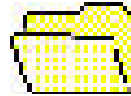
Folders provide that organizational structure to a disk drive, just as they do in a file cab i net. First, you will put labeled folders into your cab i net/drive. Each folder will have a name. When you view the con tents of a disk drive, fold ers are nor mally listed in al pha bet i cal or der. New fold ers can be cre ated by right clicking on your desktop, and selecting New > Folder. The new folder ap pears on your desk top with the blue ti tle where you can now type the name you have se lected for that folder. These fold ers can now be dragged and dropped, wher ever you want them.

Files can and usu ally are put in side fold ers. This is where you will put your documents, your photos etc. In or der to be able to find your doc u ments later within an over stuffed folder, you give each doc u ment a unique name. On a PC, it is wise to use the fol low ing nam ing con ven tions for both fold ers and files: A file name is made up of two parts: (1) the name of the doc u ment and (2) the file ex ten sion which is usu ally as signed by the com puter. If you don't see the file extensions in Windows XP, go to Desk top>Tools>Folder Op tions>View Tab and then unclick "Hide ex ten sions for known file types." You may name a file any thing you wish (with some punc tu a tion lim i ta tions), but it is pref er a ble to name a file some thing you are likely to re member later. File names should be no longer than 8 characters whenever possible. Although Windows (and Mac) al low lon ger file names, you may get in prob lems while transferring files to other computers if you use longer file names. Also, use only let ters and num bers in your file names. Spe cial char ac ters like "-", "/", "&", or blank spaces must be

avoided in the file name. The second part of a file name is the extension. In the file text.doc, the word text is the file name and the .doc is the extension, identifying this as a Word document. A period always separates the two. The extension identifies what kind of a document you have. Some examples of file extensions are:

- .txt : plain text
- .doc : Microsoft Word Document
- .htm or .html : Web document
- .gif , .jpg , .bmp , tif , : images
- .ppt : PowerPoint Presentation

The Structure

The File Management structure has a tree type organization or is "hierarchical". And, you have the ability to set up that structure just as you would with the file cabinet in your office. Here is a graphic of one such structure:

Windows Explorer (Start > Programs > Accessories >Windows Explorer) is one way of looking at the internal file structure of your computer. The following screen capture shows many parent folders, also known as directories, with

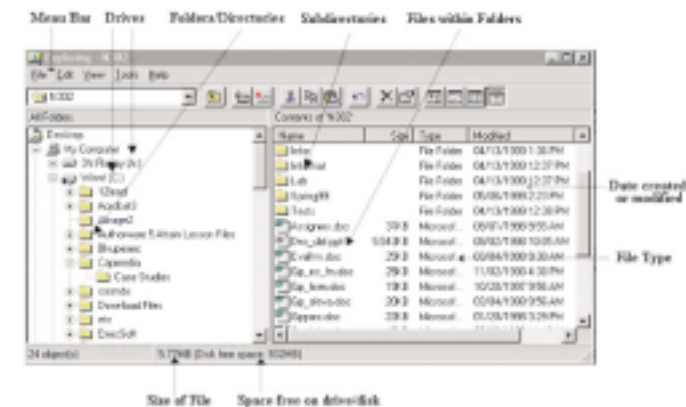sub-directories (or sub-folders) and then files expanding beneath them.

In this example, clicking the plus sign beside My Documents expands the files and additional sub-directories inside, or beneath My Documents.

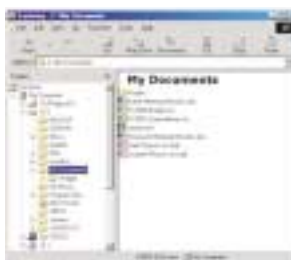Clicking the minus sign collapses the sub-directories and files.

To clarify how this new knowledge can help, when photos are transferred to your computer, whatever the transfer method might be, somewhere you will be asked to decide "where do you want these photos to go?" Sometimes the program will want to put your photos in either 1) a folder it creates, sometimes named with today's date or 2) into a folder which already exists perhaps as part of your camera software. If this is your preference, make note of both the folder name and its location or path. Sometimes the program will ask you … and then you can browse and select the destination folder of your choice. In my case, I created a special folder called "from camera" and located that folder in My Pictures, which is in My Documents, which is on my Desktop. Every time I do a photo transfer, I make sure the pictures are going to the "from camera" folder. I can decide later which photos to keep and where I want to store the "keepers". Either way, you should now be able to sketch out on apiece of paper, ahead of time, exactly where your photos are going, which was the objective of this article.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please feel free to send Jack an email at jwilfore@hargray.com

More information on the subject of "File Management" is readily available on the Internet, especially from academic sources. Some of the material for this article has been extracted and credit is due these four excellent references:

· Furman University's File Management or Where Did It Go? *facweb.furman.edu/~pecoy/mfl195/tutorial/*

· Duke University's Window's Explorer: Managing Your Files *www.duke.edu/~dhewitt/tutorials/explorer/explor.html*

· University of Virginia File Management *www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/docs/fms/pc/structure.html#hierarchy*

Speedup Your Computer – Clean Your "Startup"

Ira Wilsker (iwilsker@apcug.net), APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

Websites:

- *http://www.sysinfo.org*
- *http://www.safer-networking.org*
- *http://www.answersthatwork.com*

I recently received several questions on my weekly radio show and my TV show about computers that were slow to boot, and had obvious performance degradation. While there are many causes of this inadequate performance, such as a fragmented hard drive, and other problems, one of the most common causes of slow booting and poor performance is having too many programs automatically load when the computer is booting.

Fortunately, there are several good solutions and resources that can speed the boot problem and improve performance. The manual solution, available on most but not all versions of Windows from Windows 98 to XP is to utilize the integrated command MSCONFIG. If available, MSCONFIG can be accessed by clicking on START – RUN and then typing "MSCONFIG" (no quotes, and it is not case sensitive) in the box, and then click on "OK". A window will open showing several tabs, one of which will be labeled "Start" or "Startup". This will typically be a white window with black print, showing a checkbox followed by a program name or path. Boxes that are checked indicate a program that will load when the computer is booted. Unfortunately, as the computer is used, and more software is installed, many programs like to have themselves unnecessarily load at boot time, and many viruses and Trojans also utilize this method to load each time the computer is turned on.

While there are countless thousands of legitimate and illicit Windows programs which want to load at boot, there are several resources, some of them free, which can identify programs as necessary or unnecessary at boot. Once identified, unchecking the appropriate box on the MSCONFIG – STARTUP list may stop that program from loading. An excellent and fairly up-to-date website which lists most of the items that may show up in the startup box, is Paul Collins (a.k.a. "Pacman") startup list available at *www.sysinfo.org*. The user of this website can enter either a program name from the startup list (without the path; c:\directory\program.exe would only use "program.exe"). Once the item is found on the web list, it is clearly described, and labeled as: "Y" – Necessary, leave it alone; "N" – not required and could be started manually if needed; "U" – Users' choice; "X" – Definitely not required, a resource hog, virus, spyware, or other item that should not be loaded at boot; "?" – Unknown, not listed. If the file listed adjacent to the checkbox is listed as a "Y", leave it checked, and if listed as "X", then uncheck the box. Items marked as "N" should be unchecked, unless they are frequently used shortly after the computer is booted.

Many users are not comfortable performing such tasks manually, but there are several utilities available that contain a startup manager to ease the process of deciding what to allow to run, and what to stop. One free utility that actually is intended for another function, but contains an easy to use startup manager is the popular anti-spyware product Spybot Search and Destroy (*www.safer-networking.org*). Since many spyware products install themselves in the startup list, Spybot allows

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10% discount for 3 or more consecutive insertions				For further information contact Frank Warren, (908) 756-1681, *kb4cyc@webwarren.com*.

Back Issues Needed

Have you been saving your copies of ACGNJ News for years? Wouldn't you like to have them all preserved on a CD instead of taking up all that space?

The editor is attempting to build a CD containing all issues of ACGNJ News in pdf format, but our collection is incomplete. We're hoping some faithful reader has been hoarding them and will be willing to lend them to us just long enough to scan them. We promise to return them quickly. The list is shrinking thanks to the help of Joseph Gaffney, who loaned his collection for scanning. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: March, August

All issues are missing for the first three volumes (1975 through 1977).

If you can supply any of these missing issues, please contact the Editor by email (*bdegroot@ptd.net*) to make sure they have not been supplied by another reader. Please be sure to let us know if you are donating or lending your copies. Those who supply missing issues will receive a free copy of the resulting CD as our thanks for your help.

SIG News

Investing

Norm Wiss (cut.up@verizon.net)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_investment.htm

The Investment SIG continues with presentations on how to use analysis programs TC2000 and TCNet. Large charts are presented on our pull down screen and illustrate the application of computer scans and formulas to find stocks for profitable investments. Technical analysis determines buy points, sell points and projected moves. Technical analysis can also be used on fundamentals such as earnings, sales growth, etc. ***Our next meeting: January 12.*** ⌨

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.angelfire.com/linux/gamers/

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be January 13, 6 p.m. to Saturday 12 noon — 18 hours for 5 bucks! ⌨

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/winpains.html

This meeting is a combination of the older PC Symposium, PC User Group and Random Access Session which are now defunct. The intent is to provide the members with Windows oriented application discussions both Microsoft and Linux style. The presentation will be directed toward the more heavy technological level of attendee, although newbies are welcome to come. *Next meeting January 20.* ⌨

Main Meeting

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/mainmeet.html

Evan Williams (nhpressgo@blast.net)

January 6*: Subject to be annonced.* ⌨

Visual Basic

Rick Elbanna (rick@mastersofthecode.com)

http://mastersofthecode.com/html/sig.htm

This is a public Special Interest Group sponsored by Online Marketing Network LLC and Ricardo Capelli Associates LLC. This is a co-operative meeting with the Excel VBA and WebDev group. Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at East Brunswick Public Library in East Brunswick, New Jersey. Meeting times vary depending on the busy schedule of the Library. Times will be emailed to interested developers — send email to Rick to put your name on the notification list. Because of limited seating, those expecting to attend should email Rick prior to the meeting. Walk-ins are welcome, but are not guaranteed a seat. ⌨

LUNICS (Linux/Unix)

Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

http//www.acgnj.org/groups/lunics.html

LUNICS is a group for those who share an interest in Unix and similar operating systems. While we do quite a bit with Linux, we've also been known to discuss Solaris and BSD too. We generally meet on the first Monday of the month at 8:00 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. ***Next meeting February 6.*** ⌨

Web Dev

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson in charge. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. One can also send projects to the ACGNJ Newsletter editor for inclusion in the next volume.

WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but the other langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc. ⌨

Human Networking

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/hns.htm

Mark Douches (mad-networking@pobox.com)

The purpose of this SIG is to expand the number of professionals that we know so that connections can be made into different markets or industries when a career change or business need is necessary. We are not just a group of people who like computers or technology. Our membership consists of Information Technology professionals from various industries. We will discuss over a time period the tools and skills that are necessary to cross a bridge advance your career. Meetings are held 2nd Wednesday of the Month at 7:00 P.M. ⌨

Genealogy

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

http://www.webwarren.com/kb4cyc/gensig.html

Genealogy SIG is for genealogists interested in computers and computer users interested in genealogy, and is a forum to assist members in furtherance of both endeavors. Meetings usually focus on genealogy more than on computers. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month, but **we do not meet in November or December**. In addition to our Web page, we also have an electronic mailing list. Messages to the list should be addressed to *gensig@webwarren.com*. To subscribe, include the line "subscribe gensig" in the body of the message. ⌨

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

http://www.blast.net/barnold

This group is devoted to discussing programming languages in general and C, C++, and C++ for Windows programming in particular. Each month a small but hopefully useful program (complete with source code) is presented for discussion.

December: DropMp3.exe - A Music Player for Mp3 and Wma Files*.* The object of this application is to play MP3 or WMA files from a Drag and Drop List. Use "Drag and Drop" from Windows Explorer to play any file or group of files. Use "Drag and Drop" with folder names to play all of the files in the folder. The application uses the Microsoft "MCIWnd Window Class". As usual, the code is available at our website. ***Our next meeting January 17.***🖳

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/laymans.html

We meet on the second Monday of the month (no meetings in July and August) to discuss issues of interest to novice users or those who are planning to get started in computing. Watch our Web page for updates and announcements. 🖳

Lotus Notes

Mike Barlow (mwb@injersey.com)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_lotusnotes.htm

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the offices of Bright Ideas Software, 1060 Amboy Avenue, 2nd Floor, Edison NJ at 7 PM (Random Access 6:30). Call (732)417-5778 for last-minute changes, cancellations, information on future meetings, locations, directions, etc. Directions are posted on our Web page. 🖳

VBA & Excel

Jim Ditaranto (fryr92a@prodigy.com)

http://www.excelvba.homestead.com

VBA is implemented in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Project and Microsoft Access, and will be implemented in Word and PowerPoint. Anyone interested in using any Microsoft Office and VBA is invited — ***7 PM third Monday***. Currently Jim is improving his skill set, so David McRitchie and John Raff will carry the banner. 🖳

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

http://www.redlich.net/javasig/

The Java Users Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include related topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month starting promptly at 7:30 PM.

December: **Technical Overview of xProcess.**

January: To be announced. 🖳

DotNet

This group has disbanded. 🖳

Macintosh Users

Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu)

This group is no longer meeting, but Keith is still available to help Mac users via telephone or email. 🖳

MCP

(Microsoft Certified Professional)

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.angelfire.com/linux/gamers/mcse.html

The MCSE SIG is a study group with the goal of preparing for the Microsoft Certification Exams. In February of 2000 "Windows 2000" debuted along with new MCSE tests. It's two years later and we have settled somewhere between W2k Pro/Server and Windows XP in our studies. Windows NT while still viable, is history as far as Microsoft is concerned. Windows .NET server should be out this year and should look like Windows XP-Server.

The books we will be using are "Mastering Windows 2000 Server" by Mark Minasi and the "MCSE Self-Paced Training Kit" from Microsoft Press. These books are important because as a study group we won't have a teacher to explain the concepts. We'll ***need*** to discuss them in the group. This is a study group, not a class taught by a teacher. Since hands-on training is crucial in acquiring the skills needed for these tests, we try to focus on lab work as well. The Microsoft training kits are good for labs.

We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7 pm to 10 pm. Attendees are encouraged to bring a PC properly configured with NT, 10BaseT network card, and Netmeetng 2.1. For more info, reading assignments, course schedule, visit our website. 🖳

Guru Corner

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

If you need help with any of the technologies listed below, you can call on the person listed. Please be considerate and call before 10 PM.

Hardware

	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169

Software

HTML	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
CSS	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-537-4915
e-Commerce	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Networking	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169
Home Automation	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

WindowsNT	Scott Vincent	973-361-5793
Windows95	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows98	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942
	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734

Macintosh

Mac O/S	Keith Sproul	(732) 821-4828

Discount Computer Magazine Price List

As described by the DealsGuy

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
Computer Games	$10.95	20.95	29.95
Computer Gaming World	14.95	28.95	41.95
Computer Shopper1	16.97	32.95	47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	15.95	30.95	
Mac Addict	10.97		
Mac Home Journal	15.97	29.97	
Mac World	12.95		
Maximum PC	9.95	18.95	27.95
Microsoft System Journal	21.95	39.95	
PC Gamer	12.95		
PC Magazine (22/44/66 Issues)	25.97	48.95	68.95
PC World	16.95		
Wired	6.00	12.00	17.00

These prices are for new subscriptions and renewals. All orders must be accompanied by a check, cash or Money Order. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to:

Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496

Telephone: 561-488-4465, e-mail: hgoodman@prodigy.net

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. As an extra service I will mail a renewal notice about 4 months prior to their expiration date. I carry more than 300 titles at excellent prices — email for prices.

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Sign up online at *http://www.acgnj.org/membership_update.htm* and pay dues with PayPal.

Dues

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	FOREIGN	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	$25	$10	$55	$20	$20
2 Years	$40				
3 Years	$55				$45

Mail this application and your check to:

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC., P.0. BOX 135, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

❏ New Member o Renewal   ❏ Address Change

First Name _____Last Name _____Phone _____

Mailing Address _____E-Mail _____

City _____State_____Zip_____URL _____

What topics would you like to see covered at club meetings?_____

the user to con trol those malware pro grams as well as all other startup pro grams at boot. Down load the Spybot, in stall and up date it, and then open it. Click on "Mode" on the menu bar, and se lect "Ad vanced". On the left side of the win dow will be a choice of utilities. Go to "Tools" and click on "System Startup". This will load a list of programs loaded at boot, along with their cor re spond ing checkboxes. The right edge of the win dow has a nar row gray bar with two tri an gu lar ar rows, one right (close) and one left (open); click on this bar and the data from Paul Col lins' startup list (men tioned above) will be shown as each listed item is clicked on. Nec es sary items are high lighted in green, and us ers' choice items are high lighted yel low. Dan ger ous and un nec es sary items are high lighted in red, and white items are unknown to "Pacman". Unwanted items can have their corresponding "check" removed by click ing on the checkbox; this will stop the item from load ing at boot. Items can also be de leted us ing the red "X" at the top of the window. When Spybot is exited, the changes to the startup will be saved, and should not load at the next boot.

A reasonably priced ($20) commercial program that offers greater power and flex i bil ity to con trol what loads when the computer boots is a Brit ish pro gram "The Ul ti mate Trou ble Shooter" avail able at *www.answersthatwork.com*. Open the pro gram and click "Startups". Ini tially, startup pro grams will be labeled in the traditional red (remove), yellow (personal choice), green (leave it alone), and white (not listed). Upon click ing on any startup item a de tailed de scrip tion is dis played on the bot tom half of the win dow. Unchecking a box will stop the item from load ing at the next boot.

There are sev eral other util i ties that con tain startup man ag ers, and most will do a sat is fac tory job. By clean ing the files that load at boot, the com puter will boot faster, have fewer soft ware con flicts, run faster, shut down faster, and in crease your computing satis faction.

There is no re stric tion against any non-profit group us ing this ar ti cle as long as it is kept in con text with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Per sonal Com puter User Groups (APCUG), an in ter na tional organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ⌨

ACGNJ MEETINGS

For the very lat est news on ACGNJ meet ings visit the ACGNJ Web Page (*http://www.acgnj.org*)

Mon day, Jan u ary 2, 2006
8 P.M. - Lunics (Linux/Unix). Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*), cancelled.

Tues day, Jan u ary 3
ACGNJ Board Meeting

Wednes day, Jan u ary 4
7 P.M. - MCSE Study Group, Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*).

Friday, January 6
8 P.M. - Main Meet ing, Evan Wil liams (*nhpressgo@blast.net*).

Mon day, Jan u ary 9
8 P.M. - Lay man's Fo rum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842.

Tues day, Jan u ary 10
7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-537-4915.

Wednes day, Jan u ary 11
7 P.M. - Human Networking, Mark Douces (*mad-networking@pobox.com*)

Thurs day, Jan u ary 12
8 P.M. - In vesting, Norm Wiss (*cut.up@verizon.net*).

Friday, Jan u ary 13
6 P.M. to 5 A.M. - NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Mon day, January 16
8 P.M. - VBA, Jim Ditaranto (*fryr92a@prodigy.com*), 201-986-1104

Tues day, Jan u ary 17
8 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@blast.net*), 908-735-7898

Wednes day, Jan u ary 18
7 P.M. - MCSE Study Group, Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*).

Friday, Jan u ary 20
8 P.M. - Win dow Pains, John Raff.

Thurs day, Jan u ary 26
Ge ne al ogy SIG - No meet ing this month.

Tues day, Jan u ary 3
ACGNJ Board Meeting ⌨

All meet ings, un less oth er wise noted, are at Scotch Plains Res cue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains, N.J.
Di rec tions and map in side back cover.

Classified

FREE TO MEM BERS. Use our clas si fied ads to sell off your sur plus com puter stuff. Send copy to Clas si fied, ACGNJ NEWS, P.O. Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 or e-mail to the editor, *bdegroot @ptd.net*. Clas si fied ads are free to mem bers, one per is sue. Non-members pay $10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please.

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

http://www.apcug.net

Radio and TV Programs

**Com puter Ra dio Show**, WBAI 99.5 FM, NY, Wed. 8-9 p.m.

Software Review, The Learning Channel, Saturday 10-10:30 p.m.

On Computers, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

PC Talk, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Phil a del phia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at *http://www.pctalkweb.net*.

PC Shows Inc (KGP)

Af ter 26 years, PC SHows/KGP Pro duc tions has closed up shop and re tired to Florida, can cel ling all fu ture com puter shows. The Tren ton Com puter Fes ti val will continue to be held, see *http://www.tcf-nj.org*. Thanks to all our vendors and customers these past 26 years.
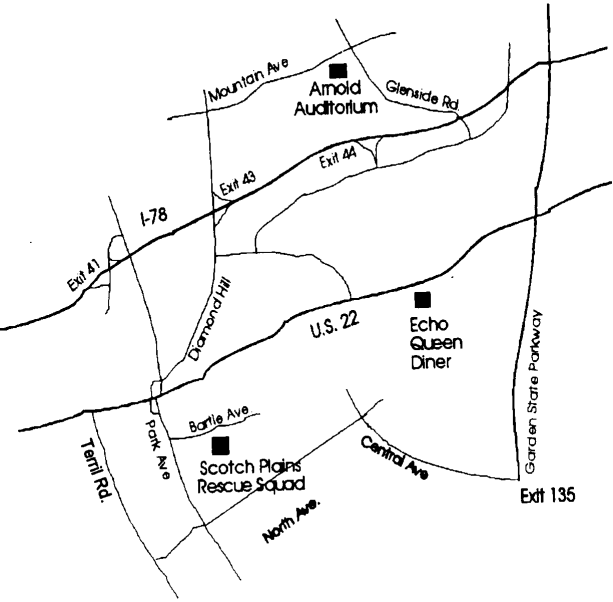
Di rec tions to Meet ings at Scotch Plains Res cue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains NJ

From New York City or North ern New Jer sey

Take Route 1 & 9 or the Gar den State Park way to US 22 West bound.

From South ern New Jer sey

Take Park way north to Exit 135 (Clark). Stay on left of ramp, fol low circle under Parkway. Bear right to Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and un der RR over pass. Left at light to North Av e nue; fol low to light in Fanwood. Right on Martine (which be comes Park Ave). Right on Bartle Ave in middle of shopping district. Scotch Plains Res cue Squad (2-story brick) is lo cated on the right. Do not park in the row next to the build ing — you'll be towed.

From I-78 (ei ther di rec tion)

Take exit 41 (Scotch Plains); fol low signs to US 22. Turn right at light at bot tom of hill and use over pass to cross Rt. 22. Fol low US 22 Westbound di rec tions.

From US 22 West bound

Exit at Park Av e nue, Scotch Plains af ter McDonalds on the right, di ag o nally op po site Scotchwood Diner on the left, im me di ately be fore the over pass. Af ter ex it ing, turn left at the light and use over pass to cross US 22. Bear right at bot tom of ramp to con tinue south on Park Avenue. Turn left at the second light (a staggered intersection). Scotch Plains Res cue Squad (2-story brick) is on the right. Do not park in the row next to the build ing — you'll be towed. We meet on the sec ond floor, en ter ing by the door at the right front of the build ing.

From West ern New Jer sey

Take US 22 East bound to the Park Av e nue exit. The exit is about a mile past Terrill Road and im me di ately past the over pass. Exit onto Park Av e nue South and fol low the di rec tions above to the Res cue Squad build ing. ◪